PAHAYAGAN NG PARTIDO KOMUNISTA NG PILIPINAS
PINAPATNUBAYAN NG
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ANG Bayan

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IMPORTANCE OF MASS WORK STRESSED AS NPA MARKS 9th ANNIVERSARY

On the tenth year of the revolutionary armed struggle, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army must more than ever arouse, organize and mobilize the masses in their millions to fight militantly for their interests and put an end to the oppressive rule of the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship.

This was the central message in a speech delivered by a representative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines to the Party cadres and Red fighters celebrating the ninth anniversary last March 29 of the establishment of the New People's Army.

"Conditions are excellent for the people's army to raise the level of guerrilla warfare," the Central Committee representative said. "We have the wide support of the masses. We only need to mobilize them in various creative ways and on the broadest scale to carry forward and win the revolutionary struggle."

The Central Committee representative expressed the Party and the army's firm faith and reliance on the masses--in their inexhaustible energies, creativity and initiative once they are aroused and see the correct path towards their emancipation.

The March 29 celebration, held in a guerrilla front in Luzon, showed in speech, drama and song the glorious history and deeds of the New People's Army, its basic principles and the bright future that it faces.

Even before March 29 arrived, cadres and Red fighters were already afire with its revolutionary spirit.

They heartily prepared to celebrate the day, nine years ago, when the Communist Party of the Philippines dared to form a new people's army, even with only a few men and a few rifles at the start.

For two days in every part of the camp, there were bright plans forming, vigorous singing, tireless rehearsals for a play written for the celebration, and a red banner and hammer and sickle being hurriedly finished.

Thus, when the program was about to begin at 7 p.m. of March 29, there was no need to warm up the crowd. All at once, they burst into loud and militant singing.

Some songs spoke of a people rising up against their oppressors; and of the workers, peasants and other citizens responding to the call of armed struggle.

Others urged the Red fighters to serve the people wholeheartedly, to arouse and mobilize them so that the dream of freedom can be turned into reality, to rely on them as the real heroes and makers of history.

Leading cadres from various regions traced the roots and development of the revolutionary armed struggle in their areas--of how a few poorly-armed men, with a firm belief in the justness of their cause, took root among their people and brought forth from them the bright blossoms of revolution.

All over the country, these blossoms are rapidly multiplying. This year, in every region, there has been a big leap in the growth and strength of the people's army. Not only have the cadres and Red fighters passed through and become steeled in the fire of big enemy attacks and campaigns. They have firmly grasped the lessons summed up from nine years of revolutionary armed struggle and are translating these into concrete victories and gains.

The cultural presentations from the various regions showed vividly how deeply the people's army has taken root among the masses. In song, dance and poetry, the cadres and Red fighters unfolded the rich and lively culture which has sprung from the lives and struggles of the people. New songs and poems have been created as the process of breaking their chains sets free the people's minds and imagination.

The Red fighters also presented through narrative and action the start and growth of the revolutionary armed struggle.

Against the dark night lit up only by a big bonfire, hammer, sickle, red book and gun were raised to the sky to signal the people's awakening and taking their destiny into their hands. Workers, peasants, youth and students, intellectuals and other members of the oppressed classes stood together and expressed their readiness to fight and sacrifice until final victory.

The celebration ended with the cadres and Red fighters rededicating their entire being to the Party, the revolution and the masses, and with the singing of the "Internationale".

But until early morning of the next day, the spirit of celebration was still ablaze. All night, the cadres and Red fighters warmly exchanged experiences, summed up the lessons from the past and told stories of the people's support, steadfastness and determination in the revolutionary struggle.

In many other parts of the country, other Party cadres and Red fighters also raised their voices in song and pledged even greater victories and advances in the people's democratic revolution.

Even political prisoners joined their voices to the mighty celebrations to show that the fire of struggle in their hearts continue to burn behind prison bars.

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MARCOS REGIME'S TAX POLICY SOAKS THE PEOPLE, SPARES THE RICH

To justify the imposition of more and more taxes on the people, the Marcos regime is claiming that its policy on taxation is becoming more and more "progressive", as the tax burden is being shifted to the rich.

The truth, however, is that Marcos' policy on taxation bleeds the masses white while it enriches the ruling classes of compradors and landlords, especially the faction led by the dictator Marcos himself.

This can easily be proved by making a comprehensive study of the various tax measures which Marcos enacted and incorporated into the National Internal Revenue Code in the years before and after the declaration of martial law.

While business taxes have remained unchanged from 1970 to the present, taxes on specific items, mostly consumer goods, or what are called specific taxes, have increased considerably; some by even more than 100 percent.

Taxes on cigarettes, for instance, have doubled. For those bearing foreign brands, and which are packed in twenties, and which cost less than ₱1.50 a pack, taxes have increased from 24 centavos per pack in 1970 to 48 centavos per pack at present.

More alarming is the fact that starting in 1977, the all-important item of manufactured oils and other types of fuels have been taxed heavily at more than 100 percent. Kerosene tax increased from 2.5 centavos per liter before 1972 to 7 centavos in 1977; lubricating oil from 7 centavos to 65 centavos; and naphtha and gasoline products from 8 centavos to 50 centavos.

The tax base for bunker fuel oil and diesel oil was even changed from metric ton to per liter of volume capacity only to increase the tax value of these products.

Furthermore, new taxes were imposed on those other fuel products which were left untaxed before. Under the Internal Revenue Code for 1977, processed gas was taxed at 2 centavos per liter; thinner and solvents at 4 centavos; liquefied petroleum gas at 12 centavos per kilo; greases, waxes, and petrolatum at 35 centavos per kilo; and aviation turbo jet fuel at 30 centavos per liter.

Marcos may claim that specific taxes are primarily paid by producers and importers of the items being taxed. But the fact is, that these producers and importers pass on the tax burden to the people in the form of higher prices.

This is seen most clearly in the case of taxes on oil and oil products. Almost all goods, especially the consumer items, are highly dependent on them for their production and sale. Therefore, any increase in taxes on these products is certain to trigger off a round of price increases in the entire economy.

The monopoly capitalists and their comprador agents, are not only favored by the fact that business taxes have remained the same since 1970. More importantly, they are accorded almost all imaginable types of tax exemption privileges by the Marcos regime.

So huge and wide-ranging have these tax exemptions been that even the customs commissioner was forced to admit, in his report to Marcos' secretary of finance last February 15, that the government had lost some P6.2 billion from 1973 to 1977 alone, as a result of unpaid customs duties and internal taxes due to the exemptions granted the foreign monopoly firms.

The absence of any increase in income taxes, over the last few years, may appear beneficial to the masses. Yet, in the final analysis, only the individual compradors and landlords are the ones really favored by it.

While taxes due on income are maintained, the amount of exemptions (P1,800 for single individuals and P3,000 for married persons or heads of families) has never been increased, despite the annual inflation, or increase in prices, and the stagnation of wages, especially since the declaration of martial law.

Moreover, the additional exemption of P1,000 for every dependent, the number of which was previously unlimited, have been made applicable to only four since 1972, on the pretext of encouraging population control. This revision of the revenue code conveniently ignores the fact that the average Filipino family has five to six children.

Similarly, increases in the real property tax have been hitting hard the residential lot and house owners and the Filipino owners of commercial and industrial firms. But the biggest owners of property in the country, the U.S. and other foreign monopoly capitalists, have been spared the revenue ax by the almost endless tax "holidays" granted to them by the Marcos regime on land, on the purchase and use of machinery and equipment, and on factory plants and office buildings.

Hardest hit by these tax increases are those residing and/or operating their business in the Greater Manila area. To seize the biggest tax loot possible from the people, the dictator's wife, Imelda Marcos, has increased the minimum tax rate on commercial and industrial properties from ½ of 1 percent of the assessed value of the property in the entire area to 2 percent in the cities and 1½ percent in the municipalities. Likewise, she has increased the minimum tax rate on residential properties from ½ of 1 percent of the assessed value of the property in the entire area to 1½ percent in the cities and 1 percent in the municipalities.

But this is not the end of the story on taxes on commercial and industrial properties. Because they lessen the profits derived from the use of these properties, the burden imposed by such taxes is passed on by the owners to the end-users of their products in the form of higher prices and higher rentals.

Whichever way the taxes are imposed by the Marcos regime, it is always the masses of the people who carry their brunt and suffer from them in the end. Either they pay for these taxes directly or suffer from its consequences indirectly in the form of higher prices.

Worse, the taxes the people pay are only spent for the benefit of their oppressors and exploiters. Of the ₱27.4 billion budget promulgated by the reactionary government last year, more than one-half was spent for the fascist military and for infrastructures which were primarily intended to support the expansion of imperialist investments in the country.

The class bias, in favor of the ruling classes, of the taxation policy of the Marcos regime is very obvious.

* * *

MASSES IN VISAYAS ORGANIZE TO COMBAT REGIME'S TERRORISM

Gradually, in barrio and city alike, the Filipino people are waking up to the awesome power they hold in their hands once they unite and act militantly in their interest.

Any number of cases could be cited to show this. But let's concentrate on the concrete experience of the peasant masses of nine barrios of Tapaz, Capiz. Their struggle exemplifies the growing antifascist movement in the whole Visayas as well as other parts of the country.

Because they were divided before, the barrio masses of Tapaz had been easy prey to the murderous and thieving soldiers of the Marcos fascist regime. But because they are united and vigilant today, they confront the fascists for every crime they commit.

It was fascist oppression that solidified the ranks of the peasant masses in the nine barrios of Abangay, Artuz, Daan Sur, Lahug, Minan, Rizal Sur, Roosevelt, Tabon and Takayan.

On August 25 last year, for instance, elements of the Integrated National Police and the PC-CHDF buried alive two children in barrio Abangay. Then for no reason they arrested and detained Antonio Cardoso of Artuz. On November 22, a CHDF team massacred four residents of Minan.

The peasants in the nine barrios had had enough. Working in close coordination, they organized a 150-man delegation that went to the capital, Roxas City, to confront Capiz Gov. Cornelio Villareal Jr. and the Capiz PC provincial commander, Col. Francisco Fernandez Jr.

Arriving in the city last December 13, they were warmly welcomed by the city folk, many of them students. The urban masses offered them food and then swelled their ranks until there were 500 people assembled at the city plaza.

In their confrontation with Villareal and Fernandez, they demanded an immediate stop to killings, torture and other abuses by government men; punishment for PC officers and men who had committed crimes against the people; and indemnity for the families of the victims.

The government officials were forced to offer an indemnity of P3,500 for the death of the two children, the release of Antonio Cardosa, and an investigation into the massacre of the four residents of Minan.

But the protesting barrio and city masses knew that whatever sum the government offered would not bring back the lives of the murder victims. And they have had enough of unfulfilled government promises.

Lagab sa Nakatundan (Spark in the West), revolutionary mass newspaper in Western Visayas, quoted the peasant masses in its December 24 issue as saying:

"We will return again and again until we get complete satisfaction of our demands. And each time we return, our ranks will be bigger and stronger."

For their part, the mass activists who had helped organize the mass protest had some self-criticism to make. "We underestimated the determination and strength of the masses and were conservative for a time," they said. "We gain valuable lessons from this experience."

Elsewhere in the Western Visayan region, people also were building up strength through their unity and common struggle.

According to a report, some 4,500 people staged a militant march and rally in Bacolod City on March 5 to protest against government terrorism.

Placards abounded as the united force of sugarcane plantation workers, industrial workers, fishermen, vendors, scavengers, mothers, professionals, students and other youth, and church people from various parts of Negros Occidental participated in "an experience of solidarity and strength".

Among the subjects of their protest were the forcible ejectment of Bacolod urban poor residents, 10 killings of innocent men in the few months previous, and 17 arrest and torture cases.

Earlier, on November 15, 500 people marched with placards in Ibajay, Aklan, to protest fascist atrocities. They confronted PC provincial authorities for the murders of Jose Belinario of barrio San Jose, Nalle, Expedito Umanbing of Mangga, Nalle, Jimmy Bautista and his aunt Edita Bautista, and Loreto Belinario.

In the Eastern Visayan region, the peasant masses are likewise getting united in protesting atrocities by forces of the Marcos regime.

Along with church people, they have taken their protest to the fascist chieftain Marcos. In a letter to Marcos, they said:

"In Calbiga, Western Samar...military operations have become widespread. Ordinary farmers are harassed, detained indiscriminately, maltreated, and killed. The houses and crops of innocent farmers are either stolen or razed to the ground. Women are abused.

"...In the 19 barrios affected, these atrocities are committed by members of the 953rd (PC) Company under the command of Major Pedro Montaño. The victims are forced to flee their homes. They are now in the poblacion of Calbiga, Villareal and Zumarraga.

"Housed in improvised shanties and shacks, the refugees live sub-human lives. Food is lacking. Health and sanitation is poor. Above all, the farmers have no means of livelihood."

The people were also worried over the shortage of food in Calbiga, and a further increase in prices, because the peasants are prevented from working in the fields.

With the help of Bishop Ricardo Tancinco Jr. of Calbayog City, the people demanded the complete stop of military operations, the investigation and prosecution of guilty parties, payment for loss of lives and property, and mobilization of such agencies as the Red Cross to assist the refugees.

One report said that 11 barrios of Calbiga--Minata, Mahankao, Hubasan, Lubang, Literon, Kaamlungan, Binangaran, Biri, Gimbanga, San Mauricio and Otok--have been entirely or partially burned by forces of the Marcos regime. Fascist soldiers beat up or kill civilians they meet along the way.

The regime's defense secretary, Juan Ponce Enrile, has since promised to have these atrocities investigated.

But past experience has shown that nothing will come out of these investigations. Only a united, resolute people can put a stop to the fascist atrocities.

* * *

NOTORIOUS CHDF CHIEF FALLS IN NPA TRAP

In the dark, the Red fighter felt the sack and smiled at his two comrades. The sack was half full of fat green mangoes. They took out four or five of the delicious fruits and scattered them on the path.

The Red fighters were not engaged in some mindless prank. They were laying a trap for a notorious enemy of the people--Ricardo Arombio, chief of a 15-man CHDF detachment and barrio captain of Ulebete, Bongabon, Nueva Ecija.

Arombio was also president of the barrio captains' association of Bongabon. He arrogantly nodded his head when he was referred to as Bongabon's "captain of barrio captains". He was even more arrogant when fellow barrio captains jokingly addressed him as "Major".

Throughout his term as CHDF chief, Arombio had committed many crimes against the people. With a .38 caliber revolver and an automatic carbine (M-2), he often personally led raids on adjoining barrios in search of New People's Army guerrillas.

In his counter-revolutionary activities, he thought nothing of beating up even children as he tried to extract information from the barrio people. Instead of intimidating the peasant masses, however, he only succeeded in rousing their resistance.

Arombio was also an extortionist and landgrabber. In fact he had grabbed the land and the mango trees from which the three Red fighters had taken the fruits.

It was on the evening of March 24, 1976 that the Red fighters "raided" the orchard. Aromblo was furious the following day when he discovered the "theft". He would get even with the "thieves". He boasted to his friends that whoever ran off with "his" mangoes were scared of him. Didn't they drop some of the fruits in their haste to leave?

At sunset that day, Aromblo walked the one-kilometer distance from his house to the mango trees. He would catch the "thieves" if they returned. Unknown to him, Red fighters had taken up ambush positions and waited for him to go home.

Aromblo got a reprieve that night when he took a different route going home.

* * *

The following evening, March 25, the Red fighters waited again. As they had expected, Aromblo soon showed up. Certain that he had scared off the "thieves" for good, he started walking home at 7 o'clock that evening.

Guns fired as Aromblo came abreast of the NPA guerrillas' ambush position. As he dropped dead, the Red fighters swiftly emerged from the shadows, confiscated Aromblo's M-2 and withdrew.

People's justice had finally caught up with Aromblo. The Red fighters not only succeeded in eliminating an obstacle along the path of the revolutionary movement, they also had a new carbine to add to the people's arsenal.

* * *

LIFE IN U.S. IS DIFFICULT FOR FILIPINOS, OTHER MINORITIES

The embraces, handshakes and goodbyes at the airport seemed endless. It would be many a year before family and friends could reunite with Len, a young Filipino nurse bound for the United States.

Although separation would be painful, they all felt that Len was a very lucky person. In a few hours, she'd be setting foot on the "promised land". And in a few days, she'd be employed in a big hospital, making plenty of U.S. dollars.

What they did not know was that in fleeing the hardships at home, Len might be encountering bigger hardships abroad.

To begin with, the U.S. today is reeling from one of the severe economic crises which arise, inevitably and periodically, in a capitalist system. Unemployment and inflation are rampant and the American people are in deep economic hardships.

Len will have to cope with this problem. But more than this, she will have to contend with racial discrimination which is the common lot of Filipinos and other non-whites in the U.S.

Racial discrimination is an integral part of the reactionary ideology of the ruling class in the U.S. and in other imperialist countries. It preaches the "inferiority" of all non-whites--the blacks, the browns, etc. This is propagated in schoolbooks, the movies, newspapers and magazines and other tools for cultural domination.

The non-whites are "backward" and can be made to work for low wages and in poor working conditions. They are taught to look up to the white as their "superior".

The hundreds of Lens who go to the "promised land" year after year find this out sooner or later. Len herself might find a job not as a nurse but as a minor clerk earning barely enough for her subsistence.

That such a situation is not unlikely is borne out by recent research conducted by specialists. This was likewise the subject of a speech delivered at the University of the Philippines recently by Dr. Michael Haas, a visiting professor from the University of Hawaii.

The research showed that fully 95 percent of Filipino college degree holders who seek jobs in the U.S. are forced to accept employment not suited to their training. Some examples:

-- A dean in a well-known college of medicine resigned to seek employment in the U.S. He is working today as an attendant in an old folks' hospital.

-- An engineering professor at the Mapua Institute of Technology went to the U.S. in hopes of landing a better job. He did land a job--as janitor in the Boeing Aircraft Corporation.

-- An accountant who used to be with the multinational accounting firm Syciip, Gorres and Velayo is today an ordinary clerk in the U.S.

What happened to the college dean, the professor and the accountant has become commonplace among Filipino professionals leaving for abroad to escape the miseries engendered by a semicolonial and semifeudal system that is, in turn, nurtured by the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship.

In the U.S. today, it is not surprising to see a Filipino lawyer working as an insurance agent, a physician as a minor employe in a hospital or a teacher employed as a nursemaid.

Since they would rather not disappoint their families who are pinning so much hope on them, many of these Filipinos prefer to suffer in silence. Swallowing their pride, they write home and talk about "prosperity" in that country.

The research found that as many as 15,000 Filipino doctors, nurses, engineers and architects in the U.S. are employed in jobs that are not related to their respective professions.

The explanation is not hard to come by. It may take the Filipino jobseeker months and months pounding the pavement in search of employment. Deep in debt and desperate, he reaches a point where he grabs a job that he would have rejected in the Philippines.

He may end up being a "casual", deprived of such benefits as periodic bonuses, pay increases and pension upon reaching the retirement age. The last to be employed, he and other racial minorities in the U.S. are the first to go when it comes time to lay off personnel.

A glaring example of this was found recently in the Department of Social Services in the city of San Francisco, California, where there is a large colony of Filipinos.

The DSS was found to be discriminating against Filipinos, the blacks, the Japanese, the Pakistanis and other racial minorities. Whites are always favored when it comes to promotions, salary increases and other benefits.

Worse off are the Filipinos in Hawaii, to go by the account of Prof. Haas. In that state, he said, illiteracy and unemployment are the lot of many Filipinos. When they do find work, it is the lowliest and least paid jobs that are given them.

According to Haas, Filipino workers in pineapple and sugarcane plantations and in hotels are even worse off than other racial minorities. He pointed out that in 1970, the average annual income of the Filipino worker in Hawaii was $5,252. The Chinese did better with $8,699, although both racial groups fared badly when compared to the whites.

Filipino children in Hawaii are denied adequate formal education, according to Haas. They are required to take examinations in a language that is alien to them, and only a few manage to pass. The teachers make the quick conclusion that these children are "dumb".

The result is that only one out of every four Filipino children finishes the elementary course.

Haas also pointed to discrimination in the administration of justice. A law violator who is a Filipino or some other non-white is invariably given a heavier penalty than a white who commits the same violation. His civil rights are often repressed.

The exploitation and oppression that is the lot of Filipinos in Hawaii and in the mainland U.S. are not much different from those suffered by compatriots who went in droves to the "land of promise" in the 1920s.

Most of the Filipino "oldtimers" worked in plantations and were treated like beasts of burden by capitalists who squeezed all they could from the workers' labor power to make the biggest profits.

It was in the face of their common oppression that the Filipino workers banded together. They realized that only by their solidarity could they expect some relief from their misery. They organized unions, launched strikes, and did gain some concessions from the capitalists. Their lives improved no matter how modestly.

In the face of discrimination against them and other racial minorities, the Filipinos in the U.S. today similarly value their unity and their militancy.

They displayed their solidarity when they gave their solid support to Filipino nurses Leonora Perez and Filipina Narciso, who had been unjustly convicted of conspiracy to poison their patients.

They are also one with their countrymen in waging struggle against the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship. It is becoming clear to them that their hardships in the U.S. and those they had sought to escape from in their homeland have a common root--U.S. imperialism.

* * *

REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE BLOOMS IN MARCOS' DETENTION CENTERS

Their arms closely linked, the political prisoners stood fast and, with all their might, sang the songs of struggle as they resisted the enemy's attempt to snatch comrades from their side and lock them up in other jails.

The fighting tunes and lyrics of their songs sprang straight from their defiance of the enemy and their lofty feelings towards their comrades and the masses of the people.

The occasion--when PC Metrocom troops attacked and beat up prisoners at Bicutan on July 11, 1977--once again demonstrated that culture can be a powerful weapon in the hands of the people, heightening their revolutionary unity and sharpening their determination to defeat the enemy.

A recent article in the newspaper Liberation (October 30, 1977) tells how different cultural forms--songs, poems, drama--have flourished in the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship's political detention centers.

Well-known in the history of the Filipino people is the long poem "Florante't Laura" (1838), written at a time when the poet Francisco Balagtas was being persecuted and imprisoned. In this poem, Balagtas used allegory to describe the oppression of the Filipino people under Spanish colonialism.

In the 1950s, another great poet, Amado V. Hernandez, was jailed by the U.S. puppet fascist regime. The experience inspired many fine poems, such as the famous "Lumuha Ka, Aking Bayan" ("Weep, My Country"), which predicts the uprising and liberation of the Philippines through armed revolution.

The sufferings and struggles of political prisoners today have given rise to a wide variety of forms of artistic expression, those that are newly created as well as those that have been handed down from earlier generations of revolutionaries.

At first, Liberation said, most of the songs in prison were those that had been popular in the First Quarter Storm of 1970. Soon, new ones were being written, such as "Nais Kong Lumaya" ("I Want to be Free") and "Sumulong Ka, Anak-Pawis" ("March On, Workingman"). On the other hand, new lyrics were adapted to the old songs "Alerta" (originally a Katipunan march) and "Paghahanda" ("Getting Ready").

When Ipil detention center in Fort Bonifacio was closed in 1975 and most of the detainees were transferred to Stockade 4 in Camp Crame, new songs were learned. New poems were composed, like "Ibong Malaya" ("Bird of Freedom") and "Bilanggong Pulitikal" ("Political Prisoner"). New plays were collectively written and staged. With the arrival of prisoners from other regions, cultural life inside the prison was enriched even more with the revolutionary songs taught by the new arrivals, such as "Wang Wang" (an Igorot guerrilla chant), "Tulayan" (A Tinggian song) "Agriing Ka, Agtutubo" (Ilokano) and "Diwang Walang Takot" ("Fearless Spirit").

In 1976, prisoners from Stockade 4, Youth Rehabilitation Center and 5th CSU in Camp Crame were transferred to the newly built Bicutan prison. They brought with them the songs and poetry they had developed in their old detention centers.

When the Bicutan detainees were joined by scores of workers and urban poor of Manila, more songs were added to the common pool, like "Ang Martsa ng mga Iskwater" ("Squatters' March") and "Awit ng mga Batilyo" ("Song of the Fishhandlers").

Since 1973, cultural programs have frequently been presented for the many relatives and friends who come to visit. Special preparations are made for occasions such as Christmas, Easter, June 12, May 1 and other special days.

"One important function of the songs, dramas and poems of the detainees is to bolster their collective steadfastness before and during mass actions like hunger strikes," Liberation observed.

Cultural activities are flourishing not only in the prisons in the Manila area. The same thing takes place in provincial detention centers like Camp Olivas in Pampanga and Camp Vicente Lim in Laguna.

Another aspect of cultural work by political prisoners is the production and sale of posters, greeting cards, pendants and other objects. Aside from helping them improve their livelihood, these craft works, by the messages they carry, also reach out to draw many more people to the revolutionary struggle.

"The richness of prison culture," Liberation said, "shows that the fascist regime can never stifle the fire of revolution among those imprisoned for taking up the people's cause."

* * *

AIDED BY PC, SORIANO FIRM GRABS LANDS OF MINDANAO MASSES

Logging concessions controlled by the Paper Industries Corporation of the Philippines (PICOP) have extended over Mindanao in the last few years, at the expense of small farmers and settlers and national minorities in the area.

PICOP, a huge paper manufacturing concern, now controls huge tracts of land in Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Sur, Davao del Norte and Davao Oriental. The firm is owned by the Sorianos of San Miguel Corporation, among the pillars of U.S. imperialism here.

The lands have been acquired by force and by deception, with the active collaboration of government officials, according to Asdang, revolutionary newspaper in region, in its issue of November- December 1977.

PICOP security guards harass and threaten the people living inside their concessions, and burn their houses to make them leave. The private security guards act with the support of PC and local police forces, notably fascist troops from the 54th, 56th and 57th PC Battalions, Asdang reported.

Indirectly, peasants are ousted from the land by methods such as the use of the so-called "falcatta loan". Through the Development Bank of the Philippines, loans from P1,200 to P2,000 are made to farmers to plant trees needed by the corporation for making paper and paper products--falcatta, almaciga, giant ipil-ipil, bay-ang and lauaan.

The borrowers are required to sell the logs only to PICOP. But it turns out that the company dictates its own price, or it can decide not to buy the logs at all. On the other hand, the tree farmer is prohibited from cutting down his own trees because of a presidential decree against "illegal logging".

Thus, the farmer is left with a piece of land that cannot even assure him of enough food for himself and his family, because it has been planted entirely to trees for the use of PICOP. And if he fails to repay his loan, he is easily thrown out of the corporation in collaboration with the appropriate government agencies.

Another notorious practice, Asdang said, is the "donasyon system" which requires peasants or members of national minority tribes to "donate" their land to PICOP in exchange for jobs with the corporation.

Orders issued by the Marcos dictatorship have all turned to the disadvantage of the masses who try to make their living on forest lands. One decree bans the cutting down of trees intended for the use of PICOP and other logging companies. Another decree declares some areas as forest reservations in which only trees for lumber may be planted. This deprives the people of the right to till the land for their subsistence despite their having lived there for so many years.

Then there is the decree ordering all persons above the age of 12 years to plant one tree a month in the next five years. This is for the benefit of the big logging companies which have been systematically denuding the forests of the country.

At present, PICOP concessions are spread over 11 municipalities in the four provinces mentioned above. In addition, it has 250 hectares of rice land, fishponds and a ranch. It plans to go into corporate farming by expanding its riceland to 2,500 hectares.

PICOP gets its supplies of logs not only from its own concessions but also from other big loggers in the area, such as the Valderama concession in New Bataan, Compostela and Cateel, Davao Oriental; Henry Yee (Cateel, Banganga and Caraga, Davao Oriental); the Sarmiento concession (Monkayo, Davao del Norte, New Bataan and Compostela, Davao Oriental) and NORANCO (Banganga and Cateel, Davao Oriental).

Aside from oppressing the peasants in the area, PICOP exploits its workers and pollutes the land and water, Ang Bayan said. The newspaper also deplored the social problems, like prostitution, brought about by PICOP's intrusion into local communities.

All over the country, from the Cagayan Valley to Mindanao, wherever imperialist and comprador corporations have invaded the lives of the small people under the U.S.-Marcos regime's "development" programs, there has been more poverty, not progress; problems, not solutions.

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